

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PINR, TH

SUBJ: THAI NATION PARTY LEADER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN

INTRODUCTION

THE THREE MEN MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS THAILAND'S NEXT PRIME MINISTER ARE KHUKRIT PRAMOT, THAWIT KLINPRATHUM, AND PRAMAN ADIREKSAN. THE COLORFUL AND HIGHLY QUOTABLE KHUKRIT IS WELL KNOWN TO MOST READERS. THAWIT WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF THE SUBSEQUENT TELEGRAM. IN THE TEXT THAT FOLLOWS, WE DISCUSS THE BACKGROUND OF PRAMAN.

SUMMARY

1. AMONG THE RICHEST OF THE THAI RICH, MAJ. GEN. PRAMAN ADIREKSAN IS LEADER OF THE THAI NATION PARTY, AN INFLUENTIAL BUSINESSMAN, AND A MEMBER OF THE 1973-75 NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. HE HEADS ONE OF THE MAJOR BUSINESS GROUPS IN THAILAND AND HAS CLOSE PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL LINKS WITH JAPANESE INVESTORS AND WITH THAILAND'S LARGEST SINO-THAI BUSINESS GROUP. A MEMBER OF THE PHIN-PHAO CLIQUE WHICH WAS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF PRIME MINISTER PHIBUN SONGKHRAM (1948-57), PRAMAN SERVED UNDER PHIBUN IN IMPORTANT CABINET AND GOVERNMENT POSTS. HE HAS NOT HELD AN EXECUTIVE BRANCH POSITION SINCE 1957, WHEN THE COUP

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GROUP OF SARIT THANARAT AND THANOM KITTIKACHON SEIZED

POWER.

2. FOLLOWING THE 1957 COUP, PRAMAN EXPANDED THE BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL EMPIRE HE HAD CREATED, FED, AND PROTECTED AS A MEMBER OF THE PHIBUN ADMINISTRATION. HE AND HIS BUSINESS INTERESTS HAD LITTLE TO FEAR FROM THE EQUALLY CONSERVATIVE AND PROFIT-ORIENTED SARIT AND THANOM, AND PRAMAN SERVED WITH SARIT SUPPORTERS ON THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF VARIOUS FIRMS. THEIR FINANCIAL EMPIRES OVERLAPPED AND WERE CLOSELY INTERCONNECTED.

3. PRAMAN'S RETURN TO AN ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE COMES ON THE HEELS OF THE OCTOBER 1973 DEMISE OF THE THANOM GOVERNMENT, AND THE INCREASE IN STRIKES, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND STUDENT ACTIVISM, AS WELL AS THE OPEN EXPRESSION OF RADICAL, SOCIALIST, POPULIST AND GENERALLY ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT IDEAS. PRAMAN PROBABLY REGARDS THOSE TRENDS WITH ALARM AND IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THAILAND'S NEW DEMOCRACY TO PROTECT HIS BUSINESS INTERESTS AND THE OLD ORDER IN THAILAND.
END SUMMARY.

SUPPORT

4. PRAMAN HAS FEW ENEMIES AND IS HIGHLY RESPECTED AMONG BUSINESS AND MILITARY ELITES, WHO REALIZE THAT HE WOULD FAVOR THEIR INTERESTS. HE IS MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH SUKRI BODIRATNANGKUN AND WITH THE FAMILY INTERESTS OF UTHEN (UDANE) TECHAPHAIBUN AND KIAT SIFUANGFUNG AND, THROUGH THEM, THE EMPIRES OF CHPN SOPHONPHANIT, U CHU-LIANG, AND CHARUN UACHUKIAT AND THE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL CONNECTIONS THAT ATTAIN THERETO. WE HAVE HEARD THAT MANY AFFLUENT MEMBERS OF THE CHINESE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE THAI NATION PARTY.

5. GENERAL KRIT SIWARA TOLD US LAST JUNE THAT PRAMAN WOULD MAKE A GOOD PRIME MINISTER. HE SPOKE WELL OF PRAMAN'S MILITARY BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE IN CIVILIAN AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND ADMIRER HIS DECISIVENESS AND FIRMNESS. OTHER AMERICANS WHO TALKED WITH KRIT EARLIER LAST YEAR GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE TWO GENERALS WERE FAIRLY CLOSE AND THAT
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PRAMAN WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO KRIT'S GUIDANCE.

6. KRIT AND PRAMAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE 1957 COUP WHICH ENDED THE RULE OF PRAMAN'S SPONSOR, PHIBUN SONGKHRAM, AND BEGAN THE RULE OF THE SARIT-THANOM-PRAPHAT-KRIT GROUP. DESPITE A MEASURE OF SURFACE CORDIALITY, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GENERALS MAY STILL BE COOL. KRIT MAY ALSO HESITATE GIVING HIS APPROVAL TO A MAN OF

PRAMAN'S INFLUENCE AND STATURE IN THE POWERFUL SINO-THAI BUSINESS COMMUNITY. KRIT CERTAINLY DOES NOT LACK CONTACTS AMONG RICH CHINESE BUSINESSMEN, BUT HE MAY BE SLOW TO ELEVATE A POTENTIAL RIVAL LIKE PRAMAN. THEY ARE NOT KNOWN TO HAVE DIRECT BUSINESS LINKS, BUT ARE INDIRECTLY TIED TO ONE ANOTHER THROUGH MUTUAL FRIENDS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATES LIKE FORMER MINISTER OF INDUSTRY OSOT KOSIN.

7. THERE ARE RECENT INDICATIONS THAT KRIT IS INCREASINGLY LOATH TO ACCEPT ANOTHER MILITARY MAN LIKE PRAMAN AS PRIME MINISTER BECAUSE HE FEARS THAT HE MIGHT GRADUALLY LOSE HIS POSITION AS THE MOST IMPORTANT MILITARY MAN IN THAILAND. WE HAVE HEARD THAT PRAMAN AND MANY THAI NATION PARTY MEMBERS STRONGLY OPPOSE KRIT'S LEADERSHIP OF THE RTA. KRIT REPORTEDLY HAS INSTRUCTED THE RANK AND FILE RTA TO VOTE FOR MEMBERS OF PARTIES FAVORABLE TO THE MILITARY. WHILE THE RTA SURVEY ON WHICH KRIT BASED HIS INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDES PRAMAN'S THAI NATION PARTY AMONG THOSE FAVORABLE TO THE MILITARY, IT RANKS FOUR OTHER PARTIES ABOVE IT IN TERMS OF ACCEPTABILITY. MILITARY OFFICERS CLOSE TO KRIT FEEL HE WILL ACCEPT PRAMAN AS PRIME MINISTER ONLY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH AS IF HE COULD BE SURE OF CONTROLLING THE VOTES OF A MAJORITY OF THE NEW MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

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8. PRAMAN'S FAMILY IS ANOTHER SOURCE OF IMPORTANT SUPPORT. HE IS MARRIED TO CHAROEN CHUNHAWAN, DAUGHTER OF FORMER

COUP MAKER AND ROYAL THAI ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIELD MARSHAL PHIN CHUNHAWAN. THROUGH HER, PRAMAN HAS IMPORTANT AND USEFUL LINKS TO AT LEAST TWO MORE OF THAILAND'S POWER CONSTELLATIONS--THE PALACE AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHON. PHIN "ADOPTED" THANOM'S SICK WIFE, CHONGKON, IN 1947 AND HELPED NURSE HER BACK TO GOOD HEALTH; SHE REMAINS GRATEFUL TO THE CHUNHAWAN FAMILY. PRAMAN IS ALSO LINKED TO THANOM THROUGH CHAROEN'S SISTER PROM, WHO IS MARRIED TO ARUN THAPPHARANGSI, A FORMER DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF FINANCE. THEIR SON CAPT KAMON THAPPHARANGSI IS MARRIED TO THE DAUGHTER OF AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BUNCHU CHANTHARUBEKSA, FORMER RTAF COMMANDER AND CLOSE FRIEND AND ASSOCIATE OF THANOM. ANOTHER OF CHAROEN'S SISTERS IS MARRIED TO CHALOEM CHIAOSAKUN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CROWN PROPERTY BUREAU (CPB), AN INDEPENDENT CORPORATION WHICH MANAGES THE PROPERTIES OF THE REIGNING KING IN HIS CAPACITY AS SOVEREIGN. WHILE THE CPB DOES NOT INCLUDE THE KING'S PERSONAL INHERITANCE, IT IS THE LARGEST SINGLE AGGLOMERATION OF ASSETS IN THE COUNTRY. CHAROEN'S THIRD SISTER UDOMLAK WAS MARRIED TO THE LATE POLICE GENERAL PHAO SIYANON, FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE. CHAROEN'S ONLY BROTHER IS CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN, THAI NATION PARTY MEMBER AND FORMER DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER. CHATCHAI'S WIFE BUNRUAN IS CLOSE TO THE PRINCESS MOTHER, KING PHUMIPHON'S MOTHER,

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WHO INFORMALLY ADOPTED HER AS A CHILD.

STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

9. IN 1971 PRAMAN TOLD A REPORTER THAT HE ATTRIBUTED HIS SUCCESS IN LIFE TO A SIMPLE PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY. "WHAT YOU DO, DO WELL; ACT RATHER THAN TALK; MAKE SURE THAT WHATEVER IS DONE IS BETTER THAN WHAT YOU CLAIM YOU WILL DO."

10. PRAMAN DOES NOT MAKE A STRONG FIRST IMPRESSION AND IN FACT SEEMS RATHER ORDINARY. AMERICANS WHO WORK WITH HIM REGULARLY, HOWEVER, SAY HE IS CAPABLE, AGGRESSIVE AND DECISIVE. HE IS AN EXCELLENT MANAGER, A GOOD JUDGE OF PEOPLE, AND SURROUNDS HIMSELF WITH CAPABLE ADVISERS. (THE ONLY UNSAVORY TYPE IN PRAMAN'S OFFICE IS HIS FORMER MILITARY AIDE, CAPT. SA-AT KOMONLABUN, WHO USUALLY HAS HIS HAND OUT AND APPARENTLY DOES PRAMAN'S DIRTY WORK.) PRAMAN'S INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS BUREAUCRACIES IS IMPRESSIVE. IN COMBINATION THESE FACTORS SUGGEST THAT IF HE BECOMES PRIME MINISTER, HIS REGIME WILL BE STRONGER, MORE EFFICIENT, AND MORE ACTIVE IN TACKLING PROBLEMS THAN THE PRESENT ONE.

11. NO ONE IN RECENT YEARS HAS ACCUSED PRAMAN OF EXTENSIVE

CORRUPTION, ALTHOUGH HE APPARENTLY CHEATS, OR HELPS OTHER CHEAT, ON THEIR INCOME TAX PAYMENTS. HE IS, HOWEVER, A PRODUCT OF BACKROOM POLITICS WHERE PERSONAL CLIQUES MAN-EUVER AND COMPETE FOR CONTROL OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES, WHERE ONE'S PERSONAL FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS ARE REWARDED WITH IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POSITIONS REGARDLESS OF THEIR SUITABILITY, AND WHERE RICH GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS GO TO ONE'S FRIENDS. PRAMAN WOULD LIKELY CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN THE STYLE THAT HAS SERVED HIM SO WELL FOR SO LONG.

EARLY LIFE AND GOVERNMENT CAREER

12. PRAMAN ADIREKSAN WAS BORN ON 31 DECEMBER 1914 IN SARABURI PROVINCE. HIS FAMILY WAS MODERATELY WEALTHY AND SENT HIM TO THEPSIRIN SCHOOL IN BANGKOK AND THEN THE MILITARY ACADEMY. EARLY IN HIS ARMY CAREER HE SERVED AS AN
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OFFICER WITH ARTILLERY, ANTI-AIRCRAFT, AND TRANSPORTATION UNITS, AND REPORTEDLY WAS A MILITARY ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., RIGHT AFTER WORLD WAR II.

13. PRAMAN'S FIRST KNOWN POLITICAL MOVE OCCURRED IN 1947, WHEN HE PARTICIPATED IN THE COUP THAT BROUGHT FIELD MARSHAL PHIBUN SONGKHAM TO POWER. (ALSO INVOLVED IN THE COUP WERE PRAMAN'S FATHER-IN-LAW, PHIN CHUNHAWAN; HIS BROTHERS-IN-LAW, CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN, AND PHAO SIYANON; AND SIRI SIRIYOTHIN. CHATCHAI AND SIRI ARE BOTH PROMINENT THAI NATION PARTY MEMBERS.) PRAMAN REMAINED CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THESE MEN IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING THE COUP, AND HIS POLITICAL AND PERSONAL FORTUNES FARED WELL.

14. WHEN THEN PRIME MINISTER PHIBUN CONSOLIDATED HIS STRENGTH IN LATE 1951, HE NAMED PRAMAN, ALONG WITH PHAO AND SIRI, TO HIS CABINET AS MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER HE APPOINTED PRAMAN DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION AND MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FROM HIS NATIVE PROVINCE OF SARABURI. IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME THAT PRAMAN RESIGNED FROM THE MILITARY. IN 1953 HE BECAME DEPUTY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (RETAINING FOR AWHILE HIS COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO) AND A SPECIAL AIDE-DE-CAMP TO KING PHUMIPHON ADUNYADET. IN A 1956 CABINET RESHUFFLE, WHICH IMPROVED THE STATUS OF THE PHAO-PHIN CLIQUE, PRAMAN BECAME MINISTER OF INDUSTRY. PRAMAN WAS REELECTED TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE SERI MENANGKHASILA PARTY TICKET IN THE WIDE-OPEN, WIDELY CONTESTED FEBRUARY 1957 ELECTIONS, IN WHICH MOST OTHER GOVERNMENT PARTY CANDIDATES FARED BADLY.

15. PRAMAN LEFT GOVERNMENT SERVICE AFTER SARIT SUPPORTERS SEIZED POWER IN 1957. HE WAS, HOWEVER, ONE OF THE FEW PHIBUN SUPPORTERS REELECTED TO THE ASSEMBLY IN DECEMBER 1957 AND APPOINTED BY SARIT TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN FEBRUARY 1959.

QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL AND BUSINESS POSITIONS

16. PRAMAN HAD TIED HIS STAR TO PHIBUN'S, AND AFTER 1948 HE BEGAN APPEARING WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY ON BOARDS OF
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DIRECTORS IN POSITIONS THAT USUALLY COMMANDED A HIGH HONORARIUM BUT INVOLVED LITTLE WORK. DURING THE 1950'S HE SERVED ON THE BOARD OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (WITH PHIN, PHAO, SIRI, AND PHIBUN'S SON-IN-LAW RAK PANYARACHUN), A STATE BODY THAT OWNED AND OPERATED SIX SUGAR AND PAPER FACTORIES; THE TELEPHONE ORGANIZATION OF THAILAND; THE STATE RAILWAY OF THAILAND; THE GOVERNMENT PURCHASING BUREAU (WITH SIRI); AND THE BANK OF THAILAND (WITH RAK). HE ALSO SERVED AS CHIEF ADVISER TO THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, AS ADVISER TO THE FREE WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION, AND AS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE THAI LABOR UNION (OF WHICH PHIBUN WAS PATRON).

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17. PRAMAN'S MOST LUCRATIVE AND POWERFUL POSITION WAS THAT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE EXPRESS TRANSPORTATION BUREAU (ETB), A PRIVATE COMPANY WITH STATE BACKING THAT HELD MONOPOLISTIC CONTROL OVER THE COUNTRY'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. THROUGHOUT THE 1950'S U.S. OFFICIALS HERE REGARDED THE ETB AS ONE OF THE MOST "VICIOUS" MONOPOLIES IN THAILAND. PRAMAN AND SIRI, WHO ALSO SERVED WITH THE ETB, HAD THE POWER TO MAKE AND BREAK BUSINESSES BY SELECTIVELY ALLOCATING OR DENYING TRANSPORTATION RIGHTS ON THE HIGHWAYS AND RAILROADS. IN 1955 ONE BUSINESSMAN, PROBABLY A RIVAL, CALLED PRAMAN AND SIRI "THE MOST DANGEROUS AND RUTHLESS MEN IN THAILAND TODAY." EMBASSY OFFICIALS REPORTED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT PRAMAN USED HIS POSITION WITH THE ERTB, AS WELL AS HIS CABINET POSITIONS, TO FURTHER BOTH HIS OWN FINANCIAL WELL-BEING AND THAT OF HIS FRIENDS. A RETIRED NAVY CAPTAIN, LUANG WAROE, REPORTEDLY CONDUCTED ETB BUSINESS ON PRAMAN'S BEHALF AND WAS PARTICULARLY ADEPT AT COLLECTING "COMMISSIONS" FROM FOREIGN BUSINESSES.

18. IN THE 1950'S PRAMAN'S OTHER BUSINESS AFFILIATIONS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING: (1) INDUSTRIAL BANK (BOARD MEMBER, WITH SIRI), (2) BANGKOK BANGK (BOARD MEMBER), (3) THAI RUBBER COMPANY, LTD., (4) PRADUNGSIN COMPANY, (5) RATSADON SAMAKKHI COMPANY; (6) THAI SINAKHON INSURANCE AND WAREHOUSE COMPANY; (7) CATHAY CINEMA COMPANY (LATER BECAME CATHAY TRUST CO., LTD.), (8) PRACHIM FORESTRY COMPANY, (9) PHINYAWAT
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COMPANY, (10) THAI MARITIME NAVIGATION COMPANY, (11) EXPRESS TRANSPORT BOARD INSURANCE COMPANY.

19. A PRESS BIOGRAPHY ON PRAMAN, WHICH APPEARED IN 1971, IMPLIES THAT HE WENT INTO BUSINESS FOR HIMSELF ONLY AFTER HE HAD LEFT GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND THEN ONLY "IN A SMALL WAY." THE RECORD SHOWS, HOWEVER, THAT BY THE TIME OF PHIBUN'S POLITICAL DEMISE IN 1957, PRAMAN HAD BECOME A PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN OF CONSIDERABLE WEALTH. SINCE THAT TIME HE HAS SKILLFULLY USED HIS FORMER GOVERNMENT CONTACTS TO EXPAND HIS BUSINESS EMPIRE TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS NOW AMONG THE LARGEST IN THAILAND. PRAMAN'S GREATEST VALUE TO THE BUSINESSES WITH WHICH HE IS ASSOCIATED LIES IN HIS INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF AND ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY. ITS ASSISTANCE IS NECESSARY TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY BUSINESS VENTURE, AND PRAMAN PERSONALLY KNOWS THE BUREAUCRATS WHOSE COORDINATION IS NEEDED.

20. PRAMAN HAS ACTIVELY PROMOTED THE USE OF COTTON PRODUCTS IN THAILAND AND IS NOW HEAVILY INVOLVED THE MANUFACTURE

OF TEXTILES, AN INDUSTRY CURRENTLY DEPRESSED AND BESET BY LABOR STRIFE. HE Began ABOUT 1956 WITH A SMALL COTTON SPINNING FACTORY NEAR DON MUANG AIRPORT. SINCE THEN, PRAMAN HAS ENTERED INTO SEVERAL JOINT VENTURES WITH JAPANESE INVESTORS, WHO WEEM TO RELY ON HIM, AMONG OTHERS, AS A KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THEIR INVESTMENTS IN THAILAND. HIS CURRENT KNOWN BUSINESS AFFILIATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH JAPANESE INVESTORS, AND HIS POSITIONS ARE THE FOLLOWING: (1) THAI JEJIN TEXTILES, LTD. (49 PCT JAPANESE), CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. (2) THAI TEXTILE FINISHING CO., LTD. (45 PCT JAPANESE), CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. (3) THAI MELON TEXTILES CO., LTD. (WITH FRENCH INVESTORS), PRESIDENT. (4) THAI TEXTILE GARMENT CO. (WITH JAPANESE INVESTORS). (5) THAI ASAHI GLASS CO., LTD. (49 PCT JAPANESE), CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. (6) THAI ASAHI CAUSTIC SODA CO., LTD. (70 PCT JAPANESE), PRESIDENT. (7) SIAM FOOD PRODUCTS CO., LTD., DIRECTOR. (8) CATHAY TRUST CO., LTD., DIRECTOR. (9) EXPRESS TRANSPORT BOARD INSURANCE CO., LTD., PRESIDENT. (10) BANGKOK BANK, MEMBER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS WITH SIRI SIRIYOTHIN, PRASIT KANCHANAWAT, BUNCHU ROTCHANASATHIAN AND CHIN SOPHONPHANIT.

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21. PRAMAN'S APPARENT BUSINESS ACUMEN HAS WON HIM THE RESPECT OF HIS PEERS IN THE BUSINESS WORLD AND HE HAS SERVED SINCE 1971 AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THAI INDUSTRIES (ATI). THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THIS ORGANIZATION IS MADE UP OF THAILAND'S BUSINESS ELITE, ALL OF WHOM WIELD CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY. IN 1972 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INCLUDED PEOPLE LIKE BANCHOET CHONLAWICHAN, PHON SARASIN, PRAKAIPHET INTHUSOPHON, PRASIT NARONGDET, UDOM SANGKHASAP, AND K.Y. CHOW.

22. TO PROTECT HIS OWN HEAVILY INVOLVED POSITION IN TEXTILES, PRAMAN ESTABLISHED THE THAI TEXTILES MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION (TTMA) IN 1960 AND HAS SERVED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE THEN AS ITS PRESIDENT. HE IS A STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL LEADER WITHIN THE TTMA, AND WITHOUT HIM THE ASSOCIATION WOULD FALL APART. HE HAS SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION EVERY YEAR SINCE 1970, BUT THE ASSOCIATION'S MEMBERSHIP RETAINS HIM FOR HIS "INVALUABLE SERVICE." HE SERVED A NUMBER OF YEARS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE THAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (TCOC) AND OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (BOT). ACCORDING TO A 1970 PRESS REPORT, HE AND THE NOTORIOUSLY CORRUPT BUSINESSWOMAN AND SOMETIME POLITICIAN MRS. SUNIRAT TELAN (HER SON IS RUMORED TO HAVE HIRED THE GUNMEN WHO KILLED HIS OPPONENT IN THE CURRENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN) WERE CONSIDERING JOINING FORCES AS PART OF A NEW ACTIVIST LEADER-

SHIP OF THE TCOC IN ORDER TO MAKE IT MORE INDEPENDENT OF
THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG).

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23. AS THE OUTSPOKEN AND AMBITIOUS LEADER OF THE TTMA, ATI, TCOC, AND BOT, PRAMAN HAS TRAVELED TO EUROPE, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED STATES AS A MEMBER OF VARIOUS TRADE AND NEGOTIATING TEAMS. IN MAY 1971, A FAIRLY REPRESENTATIVE YEAR, PRAMAN WAS A MEMBER OF A TRADE MISSION TO THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE, AND UPON HIS RETURN PREDICTED EXTENSIVE TRADE RELATIONS IF THE RTG WOULD PERMIT THEM. IN DECEMBER OF THAT YEAR, HE HEADED A THAI DELEGATION TO TOKYO FOR MEETINGS OF THE THAI-JAPAN JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRADE, WHICH ATTEMPTS TO PROMOTE THAI EXPORTS TO JAPAN. HE LATER CRITICIZED JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN FOR THEIR LACK OF COOPERATION IN BUYING GOODS FROM THAILAND AND RECOMMENDED HIGHER TARIFFS ON JAPANESE IMPORTS TO THAILAND IN RETALIATION. ALSO IN DECEMBER PRAMAN WAS A MEMBER OF A DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON, D.C., WHICH ATTEMPTED TO NEGOTIATE A HIGHER SHARE OF THE U.S. TEXTILE MARKET. HE CRITICIZED THE UNITED STATES FOR INDIFFERENCE AND ACCUSED AMERICAN OFFICIALS OF "SWEET TALKING" THE DELEGATION.

ATTITUDES

24. PRAMAN'S OUTSPOKENNESS DOESN'T STOP WITH FOREIGNERS. HE HAS BEEN A VOCAL CRITIC OF THE RTG'S METHOD OF HANDLING BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. RECENT CRITICISM HAS

FOCUSED ON THE GOVERNMENT'S TEXTILE POLICIES AND ITS
HANDLING OF THE MINIMUM WAGE ISSUE. IN HIS VIEW THE SANYA
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GOVERNMENT SIDES WITH STRIKERS AND DOES NOT FULLY TAKE
INTO CONSIDERATION THE NEED FOR CHEAP LABOR AND THE
POSITION OF THE FACTORY OWNERS, AMONG WHOSE COMPANY HE NOT
INCIDENTALLY FINDS HIMSELF. OBSERVERS FEEL THAT HE IS
MORE ANTI-LABOR THAN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS INDICATE. HE
HAS PROPOSED THAT THE RTG TAKE A STRONGER ROLE IN FINDING
OVERSEAS MARKETS FOR THAI PRODUCTS AND IN 1971 ACTIVELY
PROMOTED A "BUY THAI" POLICY WITHIN THE RTG.

25. PRAMAN IS AMENABLE TO FOREIGN PRIVATE INVESTMENT,
PARTICULARLY THAT WHEN BALANCES THE ALREADY EXTENSIVE
INVESTMENTS OF THE JAPANESE. HE HAS, ON THE OTHER HAND,
BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF INFLUENTIAL BUSINESS CIRCLES
WHICH HAVE APPLIED PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO BAN ALIENS
FROM A LONG LIST OF OCCUPATIONS AND TO ATTACH TIGHTER
RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN BUSINESS.

26. HIS VIEWS ON TRADE WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ARE
FAIRLY LIBERAL. HE CALLED FOUR YEARS AGO FOR THE REMOVAL
OF LAWS RESTRICTING TRADE WITH BLOC COUNTRIES. WHILE
EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT OFFICIAL TRADE WITH THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) MIGHT CREATE POLITICAL PROBLEMS
FROM THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN THAILAND, HE SAID THAT
THE PRC'S MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS WOULD EVENTUALLY
FORCE THAILAND TO TRADE WITH IT. HE ADDED THAT MOST
BUSINESSMEN IN THAILAND WOULD WELCOME TRADE RELATIONS AND
THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO GO TO CHINA TO OBSERVE ITS INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT.

27. U.S. OFFICIALS CONSIDER PRAMAN FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO-
WARD THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS DONE MUCH TO STIMULATE COTTON
IMPORTS FROM THE UNITED STATES. IN A NOVEMBER 1974 PANEL
DISCUSSION BEFORE A CHULALONGKON STUDENT GROUP, HE DEFENDED
THE PRESENCE OF U.S. TROOPS IN THAILAND, ADDING THAT THE
RTG COULD FORCE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE TROOPS AT ANY TIME.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND FAMILY

28. IN THE CONTACTS WHICH THE MISSION HAS HAD WITH PRAMAN
IN RECENT YEARS, HE HAS BEEN CORDIAL AND COOPERATIVE. HE
HAS A REPUTATION FOR GETTING ALONG WELL WITH THAI AND
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FOREIGNERS. HE HAS A PLEASANT, PESSONABLE, CALM AND SERIOUS PERSONALITY AND A QUIET SENSE OF HUMOR. EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES FREQUENTLY HAVE SEEN HIM ON THE GOLF COURSE WITH JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN.

29. PRAMAN AND HIS WIFE CHAROEN HAVE THREE CHILDREN. A SON, LT. WIRAPHON, IS MARRIED TO DUANGCHAI, DAUGHTER OF THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO IRAN MAJ GEN BUNRIT THANTRANON (BULRIT DARDARANANDA). ANOTHER SON, SUB LT YONGYOT, IS MARRIED TO WANWIMON, DAUGHTER OF SERANI CHINWANLA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE THAI TOBACCO MONOPOLY, A THIRD SON, PHONGPHON, IS MARRIED TO CHITTIMA, DAUGHTER OF BUSINESS MAGNATE UDOM SANGKHASAP.

30. PRAMAN UNDERSTANDS BUT DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH WELL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO CARRY ON A CONVERSATION WITH HIM IN ENGLISH, AND AN INTERPRETER IS NECESSARY FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS. HE ALSO SPEAKS CHINESE. HE LIKES TO BE ADDRESSED AS GENERAL PRAMAN. HE USUALLY PHONETICIZED HIS NAME AS PRAMARN ADIREKSARN.

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO01303
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750025-0865
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750128/aaaaayhb.tel
Line Count: 569
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
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Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
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Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THAI NATION PARTY LEADER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN INTRODUCTION
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, TH, (PRAMAN ADIREKSAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006